

[24 November, 2006]

RAJYASABHA

productivity by timely sowing and optimum use of inputs for making the country self-sufficient in production of wheat and to meet the demands for consumption in the country. For popularizing the improved package of practices amongst the farmers, 48,000 quintal quality seeds of improved varieties of wheat has been allocated to different States during 2006-07.

Setting up of National Agricultural and Technology Mission

249. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a National Agricultural and Technology Mission is being proposed to be set up to revive the farm sector;

(b) if so, the details of the mandate, power and functions of the said mission;

(c) to what extent, it would be different from the existing National Commission on Farmers; and

(d) the details of strategy to strengthen farm sector and overcome farmers' suicide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

(d) The Government has taken several initiatives in this regard. These include enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; accelerating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; reforming agricultural markets, and widespread Use of post harvest technology; and putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.

The Government of India also recently approved a rehabilitation package for 31 suicide prone Districts in the four States of Andhra Pradesh,

Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Kerala, involving a total amount of Rs. 16978.69 crore, the package aims at establishing a sustainable and viable farming and livelihood support system through debt relief to farmers, improved supply of institutional credit, crop centric approach to agriculture, assured irrigation facilities, watershed management, better extension and farming support services, improved marketing facilities and subsidiary income opportunities through horticulture, livestock, dairying, fisheries, etc.

Increasing investment in agriculture

250. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANABHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether FAO of the United Nations has called for greater investment in agriculture and policy support for evolving public-private partnership in agriculture as over 854 million people, a large number of them in India itself, are destined to go hungry;

(b) if so, whether according to the report, 40 countries including India are facing food shortage;

(c) if so, whether Government have examined the report; and

(d) the steps Government propose to take to meet the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. According to FAO report "The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006", the number of under nourished people in the world is estimated at 854 million people, out of which 212 million people are in India. FAO has also stressed that a model of cooperation between the public and private sectors is evolving and it includes, among other things, the improvement of investment climate of agriculture.

(b) FAO's latest assessment given in the report "Crop Prospects and Food Situation" shows that 39 countries are facing food emergency and require external assistance.

(c) and (d) Some of the major initiatives undertaken by the Government to provide food security to the poor and to enhance investment in the rural sector and also to increase agricultural growth are as follows: